

Human Services & Aging Committee  
Joint Public Hearing  
February 16, 2023  
Testimony from Liz Stern  
Member of CT. Statewide Family Council

Support for: H.B.6627

*"Statement of Purpose: To establish civil penalties to be enforced by the Attorney General for deficient long-term care resulting in bodily injury or potential to result in bodily injury."*

It is difficult to say anything other than this is an imperative right that begins to hold nursing homes accountable for even the most basic rights related to safety.

Support for: H.B.6386

*"Statement of Purpose: To require timely eligibility determinations for Medicaid applicants, require notification of such determinations to such applicants, prohibit nursing homes from taking steps to recover costs of care until Medicaid eligibility is determined and heighten penalties for nursing homes that misuse state funds earmarked for staff wage enhancements or violate minimum staffing requirements."*

In 2016-2017 my family made an application for Medicaid for my mother. The process was arduous and communication between the nursing home and the family was fraught with error. HB 6386 will address transparency in this process.

Support for: S.B. 989 An Act Concerning Nursing Homes

*Statement of Purpose: To (1) require air conditioning in each room at a nursing home, (2) require notification of the State Ombudsman when a nursing home plans to involuntarily transfer or discharge a patient, (3) establish a grant program for transportation of non ambulatory nursing home residents to homes of family members, (4) make changes in waiting list Raised Bill No. 989 LCO No. 4040 21 of 21 requirements for nursing homes, (5) require transparent cost reporting by nursing homes, (6) establish minimum nursing home staffing levels, and (7) impose stricter penalties for violations.*

I write as the daughter, niece and friend of many Connecticut residents who must call a Nursing Home their Home. I also write with first hand knowledge about the very few CT nursing homes who fulfill quality care for residents and the extraordinary number who do not. I am also familiar with the current practice of annual cost reports, their length and cumbersome format; the process of submitting concerns and grievances; and the extraordinary amount of complaints that the CT DPH are tasked with responding to.

Is it unreasonable to ask that our Connecticut neighbors who live in nursing homes be afforded the same respect, dignity and legal protections that we who live independently take for granted? SB 989 addresses the legal protection in "transparent cost reporting". This is analogous with plain language found in condominiums or any other common interest associations. Additionally, "imposing stricter penalties for violations" is analogous with guidelines implicit in aforementioned independent living communities. Denying transparency is treating people who live in nursing homes as 'less than' we who now live independently.

Please approach your decision making on the nursing home bills with the reality that Connecticut must do better. I can speak to unsafe conditions that lead to nothing short of neglect. I have horrible photographs of my family who currently live, or have died in a nursing home. I can also speak of residents and family members who have sadly gone quiet as they are worn out from years of speaking up to no avail. They are fearful of retaliation or they have just lost faith in a system that they see no hope for.

While many of the bills that you consider are based on nursing home rights that have been established (some as long ago as 1987), it is critical that the CT legislators ensure this session addresses **enforcement** of current and future laws. It has been my experience that the tasks expected of CT DPH, as a surveyor and enforcement agency, is unwieldy and plain unrealistic. The same is true of our Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. Please consider the ramifications of enforcement as you pass SB 989.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Stern  
Stonington, Connecticut